



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/015,434	12/13/2001	Bradley J. Howard	97-0008.01	7606

7590 07/05/2006

Richard D. Egan
O'KEEFE, EGAN & PETERMAN
Building C, Suite 200
1101 Capital of Texas Highway South
Austin, TX 78746

EXAMINER

NGUYEN, KHIEM D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

2823

DATE MAILED: 07/05/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/015,434

Applicant(s)

HOWARD, BRADLEY J.

Examiner

Khiem D. Nguyen

Art Unit

2823

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 April 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 6,8-10,19,21-24,34-37 and 49-54 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 6,8-10,19,21-24,34-37 and 49-54 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 13 December 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on April 3rd, 2006 has been entered. A new rejection is made as set forth in this Office Action. Claims (6, 8-10, 19, 21-24, 34-37 and 49-54) are pending in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

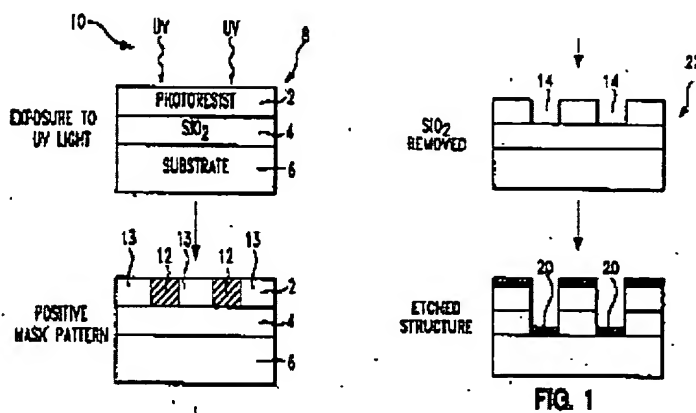
2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.
3. Claims 6, 8-10, 19 and 21-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Agostino et al. (U.S. Patent 5,215,861) in view of Parikh (U.S. Patent 6,127,263).

In re claim 6, Agostino discloses a semiconductor device formed using a photo-definable layer 2 (organosilicon resist such as organosilane) (col. 2, lines 4-10) in a positive mask scheme (col. 4, lines 3-22 and FIG. 1), comprising: a substrate 6; at least one feature 14 formed on the substrate 6 by converting selected portion of a photo-definable layer 2 to an insulative material through exposure to electro-magnetic radiation 10 in a positive mask scheme and by using non-exposed portions 13 of the photo-

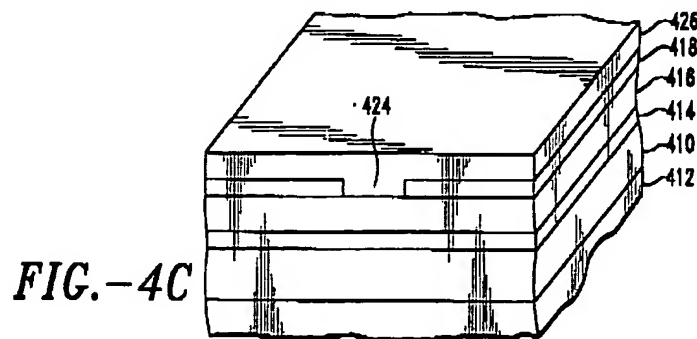
Art Unit: 2823

definable layer 2 as a mask to form at least one feature 14; and an insulative layer formed on the substrate 6 from the non-exposed portion 13 of the photo-definable layer 2 which remain after the positive mask scheme completes all masking steps that form the at least one feature 14 (col. 4, lines 3-22 and FIG. 1).



Agostino does not explicitly disclose the step of subsequently converted to the insulative layer through exposure to further electro-magnetic radiation as recited in independent claim 6.

Parikh, however, teaches a semiconductor device formed using a photo-definable layer 418 (plasma polymerized methysilane (PPMS)) (col. 9, lines 33-38 and FIG. 4C), comprising:



a substrate 412; at least one feature 424 formed on the substrate 412 by converting selected portions of a photo-definable layer 418 to an insulative material (plasma polymerized methylsilane oxide) (PPMSO)) (col. 9, lines 38-45) through exposure to further electro-magnetic radiation (col. 9, lines 27-50 and FIG. 4C).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teaching of Agostino and Parikh to enable the converted insulative layer of Agostino to be formed and furthermore to obtain an improved methods for dual damascene fabrication to compensate for misalignment between the via mask and the trench mask (col. 2, lines 48-55, Parikh).

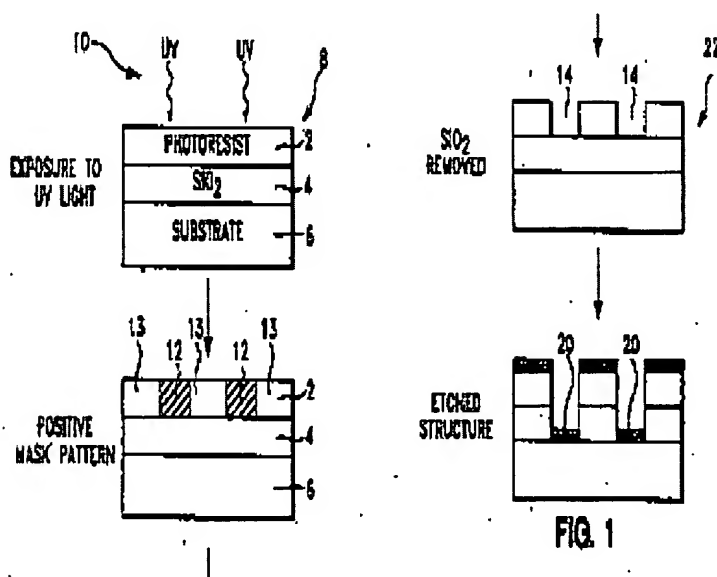
In re claim 8, as applied to claim 6 above, Agostino in combination with Parikh discloses all claimed limitations including the limitation wherein the photo-definable layer 2 comprises an organosilicon resist such as organosilane (col. 2, lines 4-10, Agostino).

In re claim 9, as applied to claim 8 above, Agostino in combination with Parikh discloses all claimed limitations including the limitation wherein the photo-definable layer 418 comprises plasma polymerized methylsilane (PPMS) (col. 9, lines 34-45, Parikh).

In re claim 10, as applied to claim 9 above, Agostino in combination with Parikh discloses all claimed limitations including the limitation wherein the feature is part of a memory cell array (col. 1, lines 5-28, Parikh).

In re claim 19, Agostino discloses a patterned insulative structure within a semiconductor device formed using a photo-definable layer 2 (organosilicon resist such

as organosilane) (col. 2, lines 4-10) in a positive mask scheme (col. 4, lines 3-22 and FIG. 1), comprising: a substrate 6; and a patterned insulative layer formed on the substrate 6 in a positive mask scheme and by using non-exposed portions 13 of the photo-definable layer 2 as a mask to form the patterned insulative layer wherein the insulative layer comprises an oxide layer and the non-exposed portions of the photo-definable are utilized to mask the oxide layer to form the patterned insulative layer (col. 4, lines 3-22 and FIG. 1).

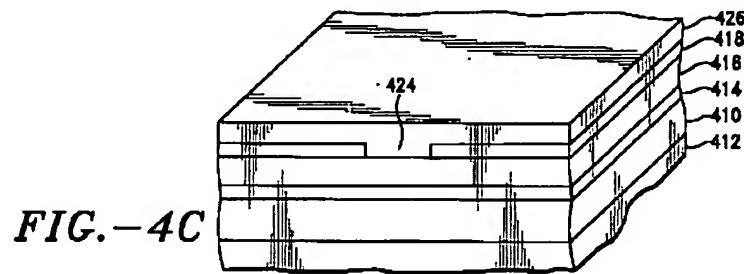


Agostino does not explicitly disclose the step of converting selected portions of a photo-definable layer to an insulative material through exposure to electro-magnetic radiation as recited in independent claim 19.

Parikh, however, teaches a semiconductor device formed using a photo-definable layer 418 (plasma polymerized methysilane (PPMS)) (col. 9, lines 33-38), comprising: a substrate 412; at least one feature 424 formed on the substrate 412 by converting selected portions of a photo-definable layer 418 to an insulative material (plasma polymerized

Art Unit: 2823

methyilsilane oxide) (PPMSO)) (col. 9, lines 38-45) through exposure to further electromagnetic radiation (col. 9, lines 27-50 and FIG. 4C).



Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teaching of Agostino and Parikh to enable the converted insulative layer of Agostino to be formed and furthermore to obtain an improved methods for dual damascene fabrication to compensate for misalignment between the via mask and the trench mask (col. 2, lines 48-55, Parikh).

In re claim 21, as applied to claim 19 above, Agostino in combination with Parikh discloses all claimed limitations including the limitation wherein the photo-definable layer 2 comprises an organosilicon resist such as organosilane (col. 2, lines 4-10, Agostino).

In re claim 22, as applied to claim 21 above, Agostino in combination with Parikh discloses all claimed limitations including the limitation wherein the photo-definable layer 418 comprises plasma polymerized methyilsilane (PPMS) (col. 9, lines 34-45, Parikh).

In re claim 23, as applied to claim 22 above, Agostino in combination with Parikh discloses all claimed limitations including the limitation wherein the insulative layer

Art Unit: 2823

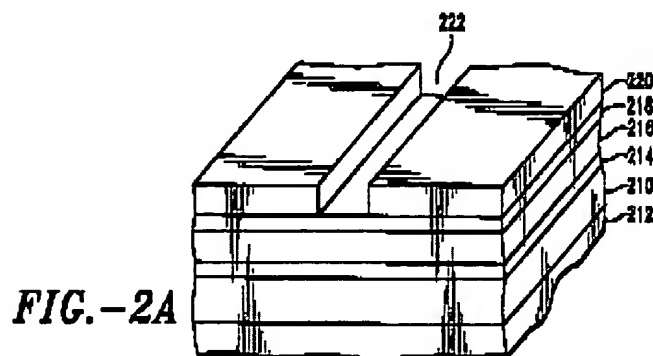
comprises a plurality of trench structures (dual damascene structure) within a memory cell array (col. 1, lines 5-28, Parikh).

In re claim 24, as applied to claim 23 above, Agostino in combination with Parikh discloses all claimed limitations including the limitation wherein the patterned insulative layer comprises non-exposed portions of the photo-definable layer that were converted into additional insulative material after formation of the patterned insulative layer (col. 9, lines 34-45, Parikh).

4. Claims 34-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Parikh (U.S. Patent 6,127,263) in view of Agostino et al. (U.S. Patent 5,215,861).

In re claim 34, **Parikh** discloses a conductive interconnect structure within a semiconductor device formed using a photo-definable layer, comprising:

a substrate **212** (col. 5, lines 10-16 and FIG. 2A);

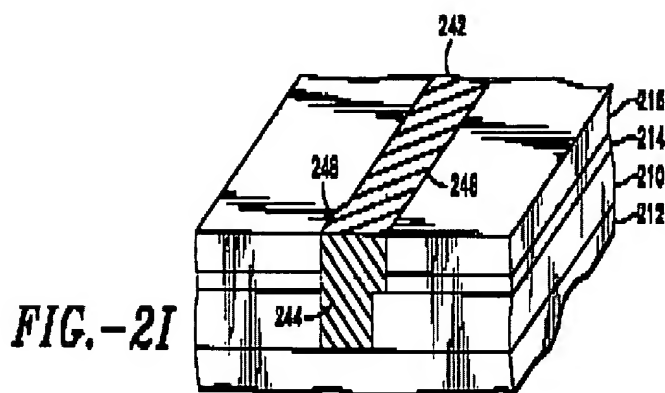


a first conductive layer over the substrate **212** (col. 5, lines 10-16);

an insulative layer **210** over the conductive layer; and

a second conductive layer **242** formed within a desired portion of the insulative layer **210** (col. 6, lines 27-36 and FIG. 2I) to create a conductive interconnect structure

connected to the first conductive layer (col. 6, line 36), the second conductive layer 242 being formed by converting selected portions of a photo-definable layer to an insulative material through exposure to electro-magnetic radiation in a mask scheme by using portions of the photo-definable layer as a mask to form a pattern within the insulative layer (col. 9, lines 34-45), and by using portions of the photo-definable layer as a sacrificial mask in etching the conductive layer (col. 9, lines 45-50).

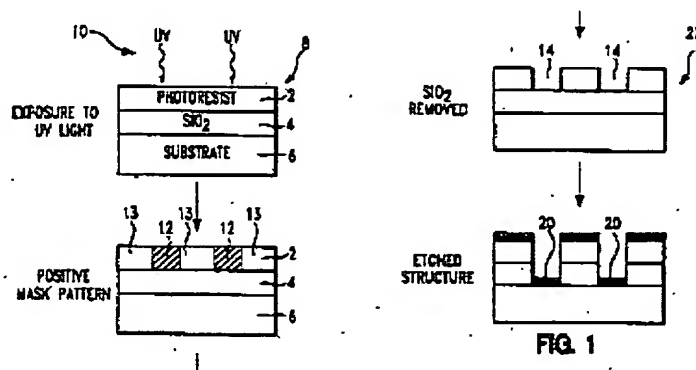


Parikh, does not explicitly disclose converting selected portions of a photo-definable layer to an insulative material through exposure to electro-magnetic radiation in a positive mask scheme by using non-exposed portions of the photo-definable layer as a mask to form a pattern within the insulative layer as recited in present independent claim 34.

Agostino, however, discloses a semiconductor device formed using a photo-definable layer 2 (organosilicon resist such as organosilane) (col. 2, lines 4-10) in a positive mask scheme (col. 4, lines 3-22 and FIG. 1), comprising: a substrate 6; at least one feature 14 formed on the substrate 6 by converting selected portion of a photo-definable layer 2 to an insulative material through exposure to electro-magnetic radiation

Art Unit: 2823

10 in a positive mask scheme and by using non-exposed portions 13 of the photo-definable layer 2 as a mask to form at least one feature 14 within the insulative layer 2 (col. 4, lines 3-22 and FIG. 1).



Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teaching of Parikh and Agostino to enable the converted insulative layer formed through exposure to electro-magnetic radiation in a positive mask scheme of Parikh to be formed and furthermore to provide a photosensitive material that may be used to formulate a photoresist material that is easily converted from a positive tone pattern to a negative tone pattern (col. 1, lines 43-47, Agostino et al.).

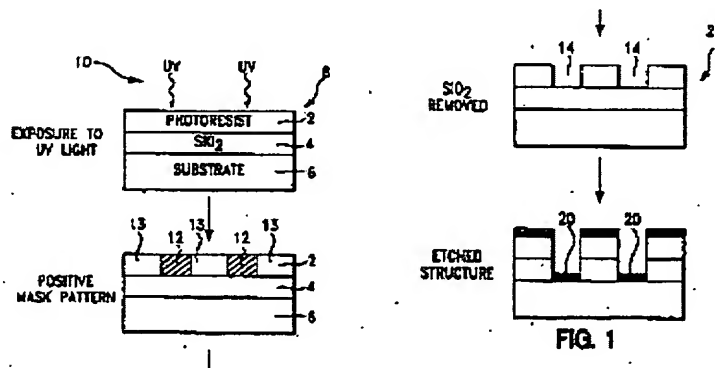
In re claim 35, as applied to claim 34 above, Parikh in combination with Agostino discloses all claimed limitations including the limitation wherein the photo-definable layer 2 comprises an organosilicon resist such as organosilane (col. 2, lines 4-10, Agostino).

In re claim 36, as applied to claim 35 above, Parikh in combination with Agostino discloses all claimed limitations including the limitation wherein the photo-definable layer 418 comprises plasma polymerized methylsilane (PPMS) (col. 9, lines 34-45, Parikh).

In re claim 37, as applied to claim 34 above, Parikh in combination with Agostino discloses all claimed limitations including the limitation wherein the substrate includes a plurality of transistor gate structures for a memory cell array (col. 1, lines 5-28, Parikh).

5. Claims 49-54 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Agostino et al. (U.S. Patent 5,215,861) in view of Parikh (U.S. Patent 6,127,263).

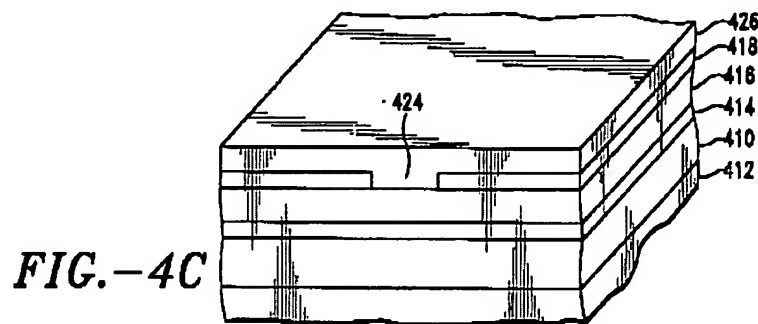
In re claim 49, Agostino discloses a patterned insulative structure within a semiconductor device using a photo-definable layer 2 (organosilicon resist such as organosilane) (col. 2, lines 4-10) as a mask layer, comprising: a substrate 6; and an insulative layer on the substrate 6 in a positive mask scheme (col. 4, lines 3-22 and FIG. 1) and by using non-exposed portions 13 of the photo-definable layer 2 as a mask to form a pattern within the insulative layer (col. 4, lines 3-22 and FIG. 1).



Agostino does not explicitly disclose that the insulative layer on the substrate formed by covering a photo-definable layer with a separate patterned organic photoresist, by converting unmasked portions of a photo-definable layer to an insulative material through exposure to electrode-magnetic radiation as recited in independent claim 49.

Parikh, however, teaches a semiconductor device having an insulative layer on the substrate 412 by covering a photo-definable layer 418 (plasma polymerized

methysilane (PPMS)) (col. 9, lines 33-38) with a separate patterned organic photoresist 426 by converting selected portions of a photo-definable layer 418 to an insulative material (plasma polymerized methysilane oxide) (PPMSO)) (col. 9, lines 38-45) through exposure to electro-magnetic radiation (col. 9, lines 27-50 and FIG. 4C).



Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teaching of Agostino and Parikh to enable the converted insulative layer of Agostino to be formed and furthermore to obtain an improved methods for dual damascene fabrication to compensate for misalignment between the via mask and the trench mask (col. 2, lines 48-55, Parikh).

In re claim 50, as applied to claim 49 above, Agostino in combination with Parikh discloses all claimed limitations including the limitation wherein the photo-definable layer 2 comprises an organosilicon resist such as organosilane (col. 2, lines 4-10, Agostino).

In re claim 51, as applied to claim 50 above, Agostino in combination with Parikh discloses all claimed limitations including the limitation wherein the photo-definable layer 418 comprises plasma polymerized methysilane (PPMS) (col. 9, lines 34-45, Parikh).

In re claim 52, as applied to claim 51 above, Agostino in combination with Parikh discloses all claimed limitations including the limitation wherein the insulative layer comprises an oxide layer (plasma polymerized methylsilane oxide (PPMSO)) (col. 9, lines 38-41, Parikh).

In re claim 53, as applied to claim 52 above, Agostino in combination with Parikh discloses all claimed limitations including the limitation wherein the insulative layer comprises a plurality of trench structures (dual damascene structure) within a memory cell array (col. 1, lines 5-28, Parikh).

In re claim 54, as applied to claim 49 above, Agostino in combination with Parikh discloses all claimed limitations including the limitation wherein the insulative layer comprises non-exposed portions of the photo-definable layer subsequently converted into additional insulative material (col. 9, lines 34-45, Parikh).

Response to Applicant's Amendment and Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 6, 8-10, 19, 21-24, 34-37 and 49-54 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Khiem D. Nguyen whose telephone number is (571) 272-1865. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday (8:30 AM - 5:30 PM).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Matthew S. Smith can be reached on (571) 272-1907. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 2823

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

K.N.

June 21, 2006

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Smith', is positioned above the printed name and title.

MATTHEW SMITH
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800